



TEXAS POLITICS

SUPREME COURT WON'T BLOCK TEXAS FROM ENFORCING A LAW REQUIRING AGE VERIFICATION FOR APP DOWNLOADS

Tuesday, July 7, 2026 11:11AM PT



The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday declined to block Texas from enforcing a state law requiring age verification for app downloads.

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday declined to block Texas from enforcing a state law that requires apps stores to verify users' ages and obtain parental consent for minors seeking to download apps or make in-app purchases on mobile phones.

Justice Samuel Alito, in a pair of one-sentence orders, denied petitions by plaintiffs who claim that the Texas App Store Accountability Act violates users' constitutional rights to free speech.

Last month, a three-judge panel from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the law can take effect. The panel suspended a district court's ruling last December that the law is unconstitutional.

The plaintiffs suing to block the law include the Computer & Communications Industry Association and Students Engaged in Advancing Texas. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is a defendant in both cases.

Plaintiffs' lawyers argued that the law impermissibly seeks to limit access to content protected by the First Amendment, including news and educational material.

"Equity and the public interest support relief because protecting First Amendment rights - and parents' rights to supervise their children as they see fit, not as the government tells them they should - is always in the public interest," wrote attorneys for Students Engaged in Advancing Texas.

Attorneys from Paxton's office argued that the law protects children from "dangerous modern products."

"A child with access to an app store and a mobile device (such as a tablet or smartphone) can potentially download any number of software applications, potentially agreeing to invasions of the child's privacy and sale of the child's data and be exposed to any conceivable content without parental consent or even parental knowledge," they wrote.

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